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THE

CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

PREACHED

ON THE

MORNING OF THE LAST SUNDAY IN 1833,

BY REV. JAMES MONTGOMERY, D. D.

Late Rector of St. Stephen's Church, Philadelphia.

The last time he officiated.

PHILADELPHIA:
JESPER HARDING, PRINTER.

1834



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THE
CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

PSALM xc. 9.

"We spend our years as a tale that is told."

To the serious and thoughtful mind, the very recital of the text will suggest reflections and instructions of the most salutary nature: such as are suited to all times and to all persons. For there is no period in which a realizing sense of the transitoriness of life, is not necessary to the fulfilment of the purposes for which it was given. And there is no person who is not deeply interested in so numbering his days, that he may apply his heart to wisdom.

But the subject has a special interest, at a crisis when we are about closing another year of our probation. Let us, then, anticipate by a short interval, the expiration of the present year, and give ourselves up to such meditation as a wise and reflective consideration of the subject is calculated to excite.

That we may catch something of the spirit of the text, let it be remembered that it is a declaration of Moses, the man of God, at one of the gloomiest and most trying periods of his eventful life. It had just been announced to him that as a punishment of the Israelites for their ungrateful murmurings and rebellions, their whole number from twenty years old and upward, except Caleb and Joshua, should die in the wilderness. In the contemplation of the awful havoc of life among the millions who had accompanied him from Egypt to the wilderness of Sin; with the contrast which the view exhibited to the lengthened years of the Antediluvians, strongly impressed upon his mind, he gives vent to his feelings in a composition unrivalled for its touching pathos, and for its admirable lessons of sound philosophy and religious edification.

Every sentence of this beautiful psalm is replete with interest and instruction to us all, my brethren. But the reflection contained in the text, is particularly suited to our pre-

sent circumstances. It is on the shortness and vanity of human life.

How can we commend the subject to your serious and solemn consideration? We cannot impart to it the charms of novelty. It is so trite, that we feel almost discouraged from the presentation of it. But yet there is something in it, after all, that must strike a chord of sympathy in every breast—for there lives not a man who is not, at times, constrained to feel and to manifest an interest in the palpable fact that *he is to die*—and there are seasons when he cannot shut out the solemn reflection from his mind, without doing violence to himself.

But yet it is too true that there is hardly any subject of importance in regard to which there exists a greater degree of prevalent indifference and insensibility. I think I see upon the countenances of some before me, unequivocal evidence of the truth of the position. *There* is one, who affects a smile at the hackneyed theme, and is entrenched behind a rampart of levity, impenetrable to the shafts of conviction. *There* is another, who delusively supposes that the very palpableness of the subject obviates the necessity of pulpit enforcement, and he, therefore, turns a deaf ear to the pulpit's voice. And there are many others, who, from whatever cause, are proof against any salutary impression. Oh! how difficult it is to awaken consideration upon this momentous theme! How shall we break the icy barriers that oppose and thwart our efforts? Spirit of the living God, it is thine alone to penetrate, to melt them—upon thy Almighty power we depend, and that we humbly and fervently implore.

I. The first reflection which the text suggests is on the *shortness of life*—well compared to a *tale*, which, designed for amusement, and to beguile the tedium of existence, must necessarily be told within *brief* limits. Striking emblem of human life: whose brevity and sudden termination are well typified by the brief duration of a tale that is told, and its unexpected conclusion, while the excited curiosity and the gratified imagination, are still eagerly aiming at some further disclosures. How fleeting is life! In its early stages, when going out with hope, and untried in its engrossing cares, it may seem to glide slowly along, and often lingers behind the ardour of our wishes. But as life advances, the sense of its transitoriness increases. And if you go to the man of gray hairs for information on the point, he will tell you that years pass by almost imperceptibly, and that the sand in the glass of time seems to run with augmented speed the nearer it approaches its last

grain. Who has not felt the power of this illusion? Who among us, of mature age does not look back through the closing year with amazement at its rapid flight? That sun, which is now completing his annual revolution, has by it numbered the *seventieth* part of our appointed time! And if we shall be permitted to enjoy its blessed beams, till we have numbered three score years and ten, how short will then appear to us the day of life! Short in itself: shorter in relation to the successive rounds of time: infinitely short in the view of that eternity in which it is to terminate: *alarmingly* short in relation to the *momentous work* we have to do---*the work of Him* that sent us into this breathing world.

II. And this suggests another topic of our subject: and one which must be confessed to have a most direct and important bearing upon the duties of the season: *the manner in which we have spent the years that we have brought to an end.*

Has not that manner borne some resemblance to *a tale that is told*? A tale is told for mere amusement: to provoke merriment: to beguile listlessness: to help on the lagging hours. It gratifies and pleases: it excites and rouses: it bewilders and intoxicates. But that is all. It serves its turn. It does its office. But what valuable end and purpose has it answered? What improvement has it subserved? What cherished and desirable impression has it left behind? In what respect has it promoted the great end of existence? Has it any conceivable tendency to make us *wise unto salvation*!

Behold, my brethren, a most expressive type of the way in which many, I may say *most*, of us have spent our by-gone years! In looking back upon them, we may discern the monuments of joys and interests, and absorbing cares---we may trace distinctly the various incidents by which they have been signalized; the pleasures by which they have been beguiled; the pursuits in which they have been absorbed: the hopes by which they have been cheered and animated. But, I ask you, my brethren, before him who searches your hearts---do you find in the review any ground upon which you can confidently place your foot? Do you find any records, which, now that you can look at things in their true light, without the mists of passion or prejudice, afford you rational and real satisfaction! Do you discover any decided evidence that your time, or any portion of it, has been devoted to the great purpose for which it was bestowed? that your talents have been improved conformably to the will of Him who entrusted them to you? that your faculties have been engaged and zealously exerted in the paramount work and labour to which you were

called? that your pursuits, your interests, your enjoyments, your hopes, were such as you can now dwell upon with conscious delight--such as were compatible with your character as probationers for eternity--such as you can answer for at the great Inquisition--such as were calculated to prepare and train you for the service, and bliss, and glory of heaven? In a word, have your past years been employed, not only in the toil after the meat that perisheth, but in the ascendant pursuit and search for that which endureth unto everlasting life? Have you made the salvation of your souls the great business of your lives? Have you, by a godly repentance, and by a living faith, secured an interest in the gracious covenant founded on the infinite merits of a crucified Saviour? Have you, in gratitude and love devoted, your lives to his service--to the performance of his good, and acceptable, and perfect will? Have you passed the time of your sojourning in fear, looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of your Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ?

Let these questions be put faithfully to your consciences, and they will supply a test by which you cannot fail to ascertain the verisimilitude of the manner in which you have spent your past years, to *a tale that is told*. Ah! it is to be feared that many find here an emblem of the unmeaning and unprofitable pursuits--the vain and unsatisfying pleasures--the worthless and irrational illusions, which have woefully characterised their lives! Deluded beings! Butterflies, sporting in the sunbeam, and from flower to flower, unconscious of the near approach of the frost and night of death!

III. And this leads us to another improvement of the text and of the occasion. It is involved in the question--*How many things have come to an end during the past year?*

We, it is true, have, by the unmerited mercy of God, been preserved to its closing period. But what a record does it present, of disappointed wishes--of frustrated aims--of blasted hopes! How many enterprises, begun in sanguine anticipations, and prosecuted with corresponding zeal, have been laid in the dust? How many presumptuous plans of ambition have been defeated? How many inordinate aspirings of covetousness have been quenched? But more than all these, how many of those whose hope and hold of life were surer than ours, have during the past year, been numbered with the departed?

Think of the fact--that within the circuit of that sun, more than *twenty millions* of human beings, according to a fair calculation, have closed their mortal probation, and gone to

another world! And in how many instances has the sense of our own mortality been brought home to us, by the triumphs of death over those whom we have loved. How many have we followed to their appointed house, in whom our hearts were wont to rejoice—and on whose memory we dwell with fond, though sad retentiveness? Ah! my brethren, have these desolations of the closing year passed by us unimproved, unsanctified! Have they stimulated our diligence to make our calling and election sure! Have they whispered to our hearts, *thou too must die!* And under the trembling apprehension of that great truth, have we made it our great business—by the grace of God—to *prepare to meet our Judge.*

To decide this infinitely important question, let us next inquire,

IV. *What have we done during the past year?*

And here, my brethren, our sins must rise in review before us. How many have we committed by thought, word, and deed? How many impure and unholy *thoughts* have we indulged? How many unamiable and unchristian *tempers* have we cherished? How little we have applied ourselves to the great and indispensable work of rectifying the evil propensities of our depraved nature—of subduing whatever is in rebellion against the divine will and purposes—of bringing our whole heart into captivity to the influence and dominion of grace? How many words have our lips uttered that betray forgetfulness of God, and insensibility to eternal things—that convey a direct and daring insult to the majesty of Heaven, and involve the crime of taking his *name in vain*? In how many manifest and avowed *deeds* have we exhibited the hardness and insensibility of our hearts! presumptuously braved the vengeance of high heaven! and declared our actual fellowship with him, whose works it was the object of the Saviour's mission to our sinful world to destroy! Think, my brethren, of the many evil *habits* you have indulged, with a clear consciousness of their direct and palpable opposition to the requisitions of gospel purity and integrity! of the many occupations in which you may have been engaged, incompatible with the renewing purposes of the gospel! of the many absorbing anxieties and cares which have interfered with the indispensable duty of seeking first, and above all things, the kingdom of God and his righteousness! Think of the little improvement you have made of your religious advantages and opportunities—of the many Sabbaths of the Lord which you have profaned, and which now bear their accusing testimony against you—of the many entreaties and exhortations in re-

gard to eternal things, which you have passed by, and disregarded! of the many evidences you have exhibited of *ingratitude* to Kind Heaven for all its mercies, especially those involved in the salvation of your souls! How often you have turned your back upon that endearing rite in which we are commanded by him who *died* for us, to remember what he has done for us, the untold mercies of redemption and grace! In a word, have you made any sensible advances in religious requirements during the year that is about passing away! Are you *now* more intent on securing an availing interest in the redemption which is in Jesus Christ, with eternal glory, than when the year first dawned upon you! Are you more given to prayerful communion with the Father of your spirits---to the all-important work of self-examination---to a zealous and unreserved compliance with the spiritual demands and tendencies of the gospel! Are you, in short, more religious---more devoted to your Saviour---more prepared for heaven---than you have been heretofore! It is of immense moment that you should put these questions to your consciences, and ascertain thereby your standing before God! for remember, continual *progress* is essential to your final safety---you cannot be *stationary* on the christian course---if you are not making advances you are retrograding---if you are not becoming more and more conformed to the will and purpose of your Saviour, you are confirming more and more your captivity to him, from whose grasp that Saviour came to rescue you. Oh! I entreat you, by the worth of your souls, think seriously, *prayerfully* think upon these things, and you may, by God's grace, turn to a better account the year upon which you may soon be permitted to enter.

To enforce the subject, and to promote its beneficial improvement, permit me in conclusion, to suggest a few additional considerations. And,

1. What possible *reason* can you give for your past deficiencies---your many inconsistencies and haltings---your open defiance and frustration of the grace and mercy of your God! What *reason* is there in a course, which you must have found productive of nothing but disappointment and disquietude! What *reason* is there in sacrificing the eternal interests of your souls to the vain pursuits, and the vainer enjoyments, of this fleeting world! What *reason* is there in filling up the brief term of your probation, in which you have to fit yourselves for an eternal existence, with engagements and interests which subserve no valuable end, and leave behind them no more beneficial impression than *a tale that is told!*

What *reason* is there in spending that time, which involves all the value and interests of eternity, in airy trifling---in thoughtless dissipation---in unprofitable excitements---in pursuits which, so far from leaving a heavenly impress upon the soul, unfit it for heavenly communion---and incur a forfeiture of the final benediction of heavenly mercy!

2. Let me ask the question for you, what have you *gained* by your past conduct and pursuits?—What have you *gained*? It may be the gratification of some idle and unprofitable pleasure and amusement. It may be the gilded hope of ambition. It may be the attainment of perishable lucre. But even these perish in the use—they are naught but bubbles, which, as soon as grasped, vanish into air. What *gain* do they involve for eternity, to the undying soul—what will they profit at that dread hour, when the soul, stripped of all its earthly dependencies and toys, stands trembling and apprehensive before the bar of its righteous Judge! Ah! what then will it *profit* you to have gained the *whole world*, had that been possible, and as the unavoidable alternative to *lose* your own souls!

3. And this suggests the question, *What have you lost*? All that is worth possessing. All that is worth the anxieties and efforts of a rational and immortal creature. All that imparts true dignity to our nature—affords substantial felicity, and gives hope that maketh not ashamed?—that peace of God which passeth all understanding---a conscience void of offence ---that well-spring of unutterable delight, which gushes in the heart of the faithful and obedient servant of the Heavenly Master---that calm, serene, attempered satisfaction that gladdens the steps of him who is pursuing the way of the divine commandments---that foretaste of celestial bliss, which upholds the confidence and hope of him who is sedulously cultivating a meetness for its beatific fruition---is there no *loss* in all this? And then think of the *eternal issue*?---the perdition of your souls---the forfeiture of the light of the glory of God and of the Lamb!

4. In the view of these awful interests, let me ask you farther, *What is your present condition*? It is one of continued and increased insensibility to the things of your everlasting peace! Are you, at *present*, more indisposed than at the beginning of this year, to give yourselves up, unreservedly, to the glory of Him who has bought you with his blood? Are you *now* further from Heaven, than when the death of the last year gave you a parting admonition? Oh! my brethren,

if so, who can depict your actual wretchedness: your future anguish and despair!

5. And the question obtrudes itself, *What is your prospect?* Should God in his mercy grant you another year: should he stay the sentence of destruction this year also---what hope is there that at the end of it, you will be found bearing more fruit to his praise and glory? What are your plans for the coming time? Oh! let the time past of your life suffice to have lived heedless of death---of judgment---of eternity---and henceforth strive with all the agony of your souls, to enter in at the straight gate: seek the Lord and his grace for evermore: Oh! prepare at once for holiness, for happiness, for Heaven!

6. And as the last consideration, let me ask you, *Are you prepared for death?* Remember, death seals you up for the retribution of the judgment day? There is no repentance in the grave whither thou goest---and how soon you may be a tenant of its gloomy domain, you know not! Oh! live, therefore, the coming year, as if it were to be your last! Nay, begin instantly to seek the Lord, and to prepare to meet him in judgment: for thou knowst not what a day, an *hour*, may bring forth: this *night* your souls may be required of you---and oh! if you were now summoned to give an account of thy stewardship, how would you answer the requisition of your Judge! God grant it may be so that you may receive from him the benignant commendation, "Well done, good and faithful servant---thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

THE
SPIRITUAL CRUCIFIXION
AND THE
SPIRITUAL LIFE.



BY REV. JAMES MONTGOMERY, D. D.

PREACHED ON THE AFTERNOON OF THE LAST SUNDAY IN 1833.

The last time he officiated.

THE
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AND THE
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GAL. ii. 20.

"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

IN no respect is St. Paul more emphatic and characteristic than in his delineations of the distinctive traits of the Christian life. It seems to have been his leading aim to exhibit in his *writings* the principles and requirements of the gospel, as it was certainly his happy lot to illustrate *both* in his own example—so that no one who diligently reads the one and observes the other, can be at any loss in ascertaining the peculiar nature and demands of the Christian profession.

What is particularly observable is the *spiritual colouring* which he gives to all his representations upon this subject. He does not content himself with the regulation of the outward deportment, but enters into the recesses of the *inner man*, and develops those principles, views, exercises, dispositions, habits and hopes, which constitute the WELL SPRING of all acceptable obedience in the conduct. He evidently considers true religion as an inward thing—in the *spirit* and not in *external show*—whose praise is not of men, but of God. And never does he more thoroughly exhibit the spirituality of his profession, than when he treats of the practical tendencies and bearings of the cardinal doctrine of Christianity—the atonement of the Saviour—and of the influential and vital operations of saving *faith*. Of this we have a conspicuous example in our text—"I am crucified with Christ," &c.

These words present two leading subjects for our consideration.

I. The *spiritual crucifixion*.

II. The *spiritual life*.

In regard to the first, it includes,

1. A *participation* of the benefits of Christ's death—and

2. A *mortification* of the evil tendencies and corrupt affections of our nature.

In both senses it is applicable to every Christian—it being indispensably necessary to his salvation, that he have an interest in the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and that he crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts.

With respect to the first sense in which we are to understand the *spiritual crucifixion*, viz. a *participation of the benefits of Christ's death*—this is so obviously a fundamental requirement of the gospel, and so necessarily connected with the accomplishment of its saving purposes, and with the holiness which it exacts, that it does not require much to be said in its illustration.

The propitiatory death of Christ, as the only availing and meritorious ground of salvation, is the key-stone which supports and binds together the sacred arch of revealed truth. It is the crowning and characteristic disclosure of the gospel of salvation. It constitutes the burden of the apostolical writings, and may be said to have furnished to St. Paul the controlling and almost exclusive subject of his glowing and inspired pen. So deeply was his mind impressed with its momentous nature, and so clear was his view of its fundamental connexion with the sinner's hopes, that every other subject, however important in itself, seemed, in comparison with this one engrossing topic, to shrink into insignificance. For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, he would cheerfully incur the loss of all things, yea of life itself—and that he might win Christ and be found in him, not having his own righteousness which was of the law, but that which was by the faith of Christ, he was willing to forego his most cherished privileges and honours, and counted them but dross. It was such an estimate of the subject, and under the influence of such considerations, that in the execution of his high commission, he determined to know nothing but *Jesus Christ*—to know him not only as an instructor, and an example in the ways of truth and holiness, but eminently as his *crucified Saviour*, in whose *cross*, as the grand charter of his eternal hopes, he *exclusively gloried*.

No one, my brethren, can dispassionately peruse St. Paul's

writings, without perceiving the signal prominence he gives to this doctrine: and if language is to be allowed its obvious and established acceptation, it must be admitted that if the atonement of Christ be not the *characteristic and central doctrine of the gospel*, the great apostle has forfeited his claims to inspiration, and cannot be followed safely as a teacher of the science of eternal truth. If we do not tremble at the presumption of such a conclusion, it is because we are under the influence of that arrogant wisdom of the world, which is *foolishness with God*.

Against the guilt of such presumption, let us ever be on our guard. Let us remember that the whole plan of salvation—its contrivance, its progress, its consummation—is from God—that it is wholly impossible that creatures so weak and depraved as we are, can effect our own rescue from the dominion and penalty of sin—and that, therefore, it is our highest duty to submit ourselves unreservedly to the teaching of God. His laws we have violated, and thereby incurred his righteous displeasure—it is for Him alone to propound the terms of forgiveness and restoration to his favour. By the depravity of our nature, and by wicked works, we are his *enemies*—it is for Him alone to declare the way and the conditions, by which we can be made his accepted *friends*. We stand condemned criminals at the bar of his infinite justice—it is to his infinite *mercy* alone we can look for safety from the impending doom. That mercy has been signally manifested in that glorious plan by which God can be just, and yet the justifier of all who believe in Jesus. He is proposed not only as our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, but as our *redemption*. That redemption has been effected by his precious blood. By the shedding of his blood upon the *cross*, he has paid the vast debt for all who come to God through Him, in the exercise of sincere penitence and faith. He has been offered a sacrifice for the *sins of the world*, and to all who rest upon that sacrifice as their only hope, it will be made availing to their everlasting salvation.

This, my brethren, is the revealed mode of salvation—and as revelation is our only guide in that infinite interest, let us thankfully and humbly submit to its teaching; and in unreserved reliance upon the veracity and faithfulness of God, let us secure a participation in the death of Christ, as the only assured means of a final interest in his great redemption. To ensure that consummation, we must, like the apostle, be *crucified with Christ*, by a *sincere reliance upon the merits* of his efficacious atonement. And not only so, but we must attest

the *genuineness* of that reliance by an exhibition of the other characteristic of a spiritual crucifixion.

2. *A mortification of the evil tendencies and corrupt affections of our nature.* This is the genuine result of a warrantable interest in the sacrifice of Christ—the necessary evidence of its actual possession.

Of the necessity of this spiritual mortification, we are reminded in almost every page of the gospel—and our apostle exhibits himself, in this respect, as an example for the imitation of all Christians.

In this respect, my brethren, we are called to a severe struggle with our depraved nature, which is alienated from the image and favour of God; with the *old man* which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and with the *body of sin*, which must be *destroyed*.

In this struggle consists the Christian's great work. All external compliances are only secondary and subservient to its successful prosecution. Yes, the Christian must maintain a constant warfare against sin; shun all its temptations and enticements; grapple with the evil tendencies and affections of his heart; with its spiritual besetments; with those sinful thoughts and associations which often, in spite of his best efforts, and his most fervent prayers, disturb the peace and pollute the integrity of his mind. He must be incessantly watchful against the snares spread thickly in his probationary path by the world, the flesh, and the devil—give himself no rest as long as he experiences the assaults, and is exposed to the stratagems of these deadly foes—seek to overcome them by a devout and constant use of all the means of grace, especially by private and urgent prayer—a cherished habit of which is at once an authentic evidence of the reality of our religious pretensions, and the only safe attitude in this our militant state. He must test his religious proficiency, not by his ceremonial observances, or by his outward compliances with duty, but by the trophies which he wins in this spiritual struggle; by his actual advances in that straight path of self-denial and mortification to which he is called; by his experience of a growing mastery over his depraved inclinations and passions; and by his increasing conformity to the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

In both these senses, then, we must, like the apostle, experience the *spiritual crucifixion*, in order, like him, to enjoy and exhibit the *spiritual life*. The Christian must be *crucified with Christ* before he can say—*nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*.

And this brings us to the second head under which we proposed to notice,

II. The *spiritual life*—of which the text indicates,

1. The *efficient cause*—*yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.*

2. The *instrumental cause*—“*the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*”

1. As to the *efficient cause*—Christ may be said to live in the believer, by his *spirit*. *If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his*—and the converse is equally true. *They who are his, must have his spirit.*

To this they owe every symptom of spiritual vitality—every longing after holiness—every sensibility to the things of their eternal peace—every incitement of holy zeal—every attainment in the renewed life.

These gracious habits and aspirations we owe entirely to the Holy Spirit—emphatically called, in reference to his renewing operations upon the hearts of believers, *the Spirit of Christ*. A corrupt fountain cannot send forth pure and salutary streams; nor can a nature which is dead in trespasses and sins, of itself generate the fruits of holiness and life. These must be the production of a higher energy—they can grow only on plants of grace.

They who are Christ's, will prove their discipleship by the exhibition of the *fruits* of the Spirit of Christ. And he has graciously promised his Holy Spirit to all who ask it. He proffers to all the necessary ability to comply with the terms of salvation, and from all he requires a close and consistent walk in the spirit, as the only means by which they can attain the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.

In vain do we call ourselves by the name of Christ—fallacious are our pretensions of a saving interest in his great redemption, if we are not animated and actuated by his *spirit* to the cultivation of all the hidden and retired graces of a meek, and lowly, and sanctified heart; and to the performance of all righteousness, and goodness, and truth. This it is to have the *Spirit of Christ*—and let it be repeated, and never forgotten, *that they who have not his spirit, are none of his.*

2. If the Holy Spirit be the *efficient cause* of the spiritual life, let it be remarked that he operates ordinarily by the *instrumentality of faith*. “The life which I now live in the flesh,” says the apostle, “I live by *the faith* of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.”

This *faith* has respect not only to the mission and authority and spotless character of Christ, but pre-eminently to his *atonement*. That this was uppermost in St. Paul's mind, is obvious from his touching allusion to the manifestation of Christ's love in *giving himself* a ransom for his soul. This being the consummation of the plan of salvation—the specific act by which reconciliation was made for the transgressors of the divine law—that *faith*, which is the instrument of the spiritual life, which is efficacious and saving, must have a *paramount regard* to the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Our faith in him, as our *Teacher* and *Example*, will not avail us, if it be not accompanied with a clear apprehension of, and an unwavering reliance upon him, as the *Lamb of God*, who, by his availing sacrifice, taketh away the sin of the world.

This faith, to be the instrument of the spiritual life, must be operative in the production of all the graces and virtues of Christian sanctification, both in heart and conduct. It must be influential in the renewal of our minds, in a cheerful and uniform compliance with the pure, and acceptable, and perfect will of God—in a compliance with all the purposes of redeeming love—in our daily growth in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ; and in our consequent progressive preparation for our heavenly inheritance.

Such are the principles and demands of the *spiritual life*. And unless our Christian profession and privileges lead to such results; unless it be our paramount aspiration and effort to grow in conformity to the will and purposes of Christ; unless we experience more and more of his *indwelling* in our souls, by the mighty power and renewing influences of his spirit; however specious may be our profession, and however we may complacently boast our peculiar privileges; yet we have *only* a name to live, while, in reality, we are *dead*.

We have thus, my brethren, very imperfectly exhibited to you the nature and requirements both of the *spiritual crucifixion* and of the *spiritual life*; and would now, in conclusion, affectionately exhort you to institute an immediate and rigid examination of your hearts, in the fear of God, and in the light of eternity, in order to ascertain how far you can individually appropriate the language and echo the sentiments of the apostle, in our text. His was no peculiar and extraordinary experience in this respect. He here personates every individual believer in Christ; and his example must be studied and copied by all who would be Christians, not in name and profession only, but in deed and in truth. And *his* must be

the concurrent experience of every one who would finally partake of the great salvation that is in Christ Jesus.

You will all, doubtless, acknowledge the necessity of a participation in the benefits of the Saviour's death. But do you all exhibit the other requirement of the spiritual crucifixion—a *mortification of the evil tendencies and corrupt affections of your nature*? This is the necessary evidence of the reality and availableness of the other. It is the duty, and, by the cherished grace of God, may be the attainment, of every Christian. And unless it be the result and manifestation of our Christian profession, vain is our claim of an interest in his meritorious cross and passion; worse than vain will be our dependence upon Him when we stand, as we assuredly shall do, before his judgment seat.

Apply this, then, my brethren, as a test of your Christian state. If your experience be not parallel with that of the apostle; if you cannot, in this sense, say with him, *I am crucified with Christ*; be assured you are none of his; and unless your views are rectified, your hearts renewed, and your body of sin mortified and destroyed, your appeal to his favour and acceptance hereafter, will be repulsed by the awful sentence of eternal banishment from his presence—" *I know ye not whence ye are, depart from me, ye cursed!*"

Are you, then, my brethren, habitually and progressively, crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts? Do you make it your first concern to destroy the body of sin, and to overcome, by the ever-present help of God, the tendencies and inclinations of your corrupt nature? Are you striving, labouring even with *agony*, to bring all the *thoughts of your heart* into captivity to divine grace; to mould your whole inner man to the renewing and purifying purposes of the gospel? Are you daily dying to sin and rising again to newness of life?

The life you now live in the flesh, do you *live by the faith of the Son of God*?

It is of infinite importance to *know* this. You may ascertain the possession of that faith by the exhibition of its fruits. Are you, then, living no longer unto yourselves, but unto *Christ*—in the cultivation of his spirit, in obedience to his will, in the fulfilment of the purposes of his love and mercy? And oh! my brethren, let the consideration of the love of Christ, in giving himself for you, constrain your unreserved and immediate devotion of yourselves to his service and glory. Beware, beware, lest you incur the fearful condemnation of unbelief--aggravated as it will be, by *ingratitude* for the love of the Father, the mercy of the Son, and the grace of the

Holy Spirit. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ with all your heart, and you shall be saved. Live unto Christ *here*, and you shall live with him for ever *hereafter*.